

I'm feeling so much more ready and prepared for this upcoming fire season. What's up next?

Remember, getting ready means property owners and residents taking the steps to prepare before fire season. We've talked about defensible space, hardscaping, and now for our third tip, we're going to speak about keeping track of your home hardening projects.

Home hardening is addressing the vulnerable parts of your home and making them stronger to withstand embers. In episode three of "7 Saturdays," we spoke about three affordable ways to harden our homes with weather, stripping, caulking, and putting in ember-resistant vents. What else should we go over?

Home hardening can be done anytime of the year. You can start by assessing vulnerable parts of your home. And while your home hardening takes time and some money, spend today making a checklist of tasks that need to be completed.

And these improvements should be done sooner rather than later, correct?

Yes, the earlier you start making these improvements, the sooner you will have your home prepared to resist wildfire. And you know, CAL FIRE has a wildfire home retrofit guide that provides homeowners with detailed images and instructions regarding home hardening.

David, thanks for that resource. Let's start going over the things we can do to harden our home.

Start with the most vulnerable part of your home, your roof. If your roof is older and worn, now is the time to replace it, preferably with Class A materials, which is a rating given to roofs that better withstand fire. They are usually made of materials like fiberglass/asphalt composition shingles, metal, clay, and concrete.

What other areas of my home should I harden?

So let's go talk about windows.

Perfect.

Windows are another vulnerable location of your home. It's best if you can replace a single-paned window with a dual-paned window like this one, and one that has metal or some type of framing that resists heat.

And why are dual-paned windows so important, David?

I'm glad you asked. Single-paned windows can break easier. Dual-paned windows have an air space between them that allows for some heat absorption and reduces the potential for them to break.

Ah, good to know. So I've been thinking about my roof, obviously the most vulnerable part of my home, and I've been really concentrating on my gutters. And I see you have a gutter cover there. Can you talk a little bit more about that?

Yes, it's good to put a gutter cover over your gutter to reduce leaves and debris from falling in.

Oh, the little things.

For our fourth tip, let's use a great online resource to create our emergency plan and then add to it to make it more wildfire specific. The Safety Action Center has this really great tool that allows you to build your household emergency plan in just a few minutes. You should check it out. Alicia.

Great, I'll give it a go. I was able to make a thorough emergency plan in not that much time, and it's great that this tool allows me to customize, download, and print my plan. But you did mention, David, that there were other considerations we should think about adding to our emergency plan that was more specific to preparing for wildfires. Can you elaborate?

You should also consider thinking about those in your home with functional needs and how you will get them to safety. Determine if your community has a designated evacuation plan. Know the plan details and know multiple routes out of your community. Practice evacuation routes in varying conditions such as day and night.

I know so many Californians have pets or large animals. Can we go over ways to prepare animals for evacuation too? David, I love my dog with all my heart, and I know we've talked about ways people can get prepared for wildfire. How do we make sure we're doing all we can to keep our furrier friends safe?

Our pets need to be a part of our emergency plan. For our fifth tip, let's learn how to keep our pets safe. You can start by making emergency kits for your pets.

Perfect. I assume that much of what we need in our emergency kits for people, our pets need too.

They sure do. Your pets should have essentials in their kits, which are 72 hours worth of food and water with bowls to serve, essential medicines, and a first aid kit.

So we've covered the essentials. Now, what are more specific items we should be thinking about packing for our pets?

Have an additional ID tag, harness or collar, and a leash, important registration and medical documents, sanitation items such as a litter box and waste bags. For smaller animals, travel bags or a sturdy carrier can be useful. And a picture of you with your pet is good in case you're separated.

Okay, well, I have one of those.

That's a great one!

Look, we see livestock all over California. What can those at home who have larger animals in their care do?

Be prepared now. Have a plan in place. Find a safe place in advance outside of your community with friends or relatives where you can shelter your pets and large animals if necessary. Much like smaller pets, we need enough food and water for 72 hours, restraint equipment, medication, and veterinarian information. Make sure all of your animals have identification.

Look, I'm glad we reviewed the necessary steps to have my family, pets, and home ready for wildfire before fire season. I feel a lot more confident now that I have a game plan.

You should. Great job.

Thanks again for joining us on "7 Saturdays to a More Fire-Resistant Home."